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ABSTRACT

This evaluation report is a description of Homework Helpers, a program funded under the Elementary Secondary Education Act, Title I in nine non-public schools with disadvantaged youngsters. The two purposes of the program were to improve the competency of the students in reading and mathematics skills, and increase student motivation and interest by developing positive attitudes toward self and school. Two hundred sixty students in grades two through eight were recommended by Title I specialists in consultation with principals, teachers, parents and pupils to receive additional help in reading and mathematics. The project was conducted after school hours, two hours daily, four days per week. High school tutors were instructed to encourage pupil self-confidence and to provide a warm climate in which the students could perform freely. A student questionnaire consisting of twelve items explored attitudes toward school, self, tutors, reading, and mathematics. The questionnaire was given to the students twice as a pre-and post-evaluation. The results indicated that the students demonstrated considerable improvements in attitude toward self and school by the end of the program. The students reading and mathematics skills improved and were reflected in higher grade levels in those subjects. A copy of the questionnaire used in the program evaluation is included in the appendix. (JP)

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HOMEWORK HELPER COMPONENT

EVALUATION PERIOD

SCHOOL YEAR 1974-75

PAUL KAHN

An evaluation of a New York City School district educational project funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL 89-10) performed for the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1974-75 school year.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: THE PROGRAM 1

Chapter 2: EVALUATIVE PROCEDURES 2

Chapter 3: FINDINGS

Evaluative Objective 6.1 / 3
Evaluative Objective 6 / 5
Tutors / 6
Site Visits / 7
Conferences / 9
Problems and Suggestions / 10

Chapter 4: SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 11

APPENDIX

Form 30D / 13
Student Questionnaire / 14

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: ITEM ANALYSIS 4

Table 2: RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE 5

Chapter 1: THE PROGRAM

Directed to students enrolled in the Title I Corrective Reading and Mathematics components, Homework Helpers was designed to provide individualized tutorial assistance for those deemed in need of such added service.

The Homework Helpers program was offered in nine non-public schools with disadvantaged youngsters. Staffed by one master teacher, one educational assistant and a maximum of ten high school student tutors, the project was conducted during after-school hours, two hours daily, four days per week. Some 260 pupils in grades two through eight received help in reading and mathematics by way of the program. Participants were selected after recommendation by Title I specialists in cooperation with building principals and classroom teachers and in consultation with parents and pupils.

Homework Helpers had a dual purpose. First was to improve the competency of the children in reading and mathematics skills. In the main, these achievement effects were accounted for in the Corrective Reading and Mathematics instructional components. Second was to increase pupil motivation and interest by developing positive attitudes toward self and school. To that end, participants were given the opportunity to develop a close relationship with older students who had been reasonably successful in school and could serve as competent models. Tutors were instructed to encourage pupil self-confidence and to provide a warm climate in which youngsters could perform freely.

Because of late funding, the program was operational from November, 1974 to June, 1975.

Chapter II: EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURES

6. The major academic achievement effects, as a result of services provided by the Homework Helpers, are accounted for in the two main instructional components of Corrective Reading and Corrective Mathematics.

6.1 Additionally, program personnel will develop a questionnaire on attitudes towards self and school, that have improved as a result of participation in this component. Program personnel will administer the questionnaire on a pre/post test basis. Improvement in these areas, based on questionnaire responses, will be analyzed qualitatively in narrative, descriptive form.

The following procedures were utilized to meet the above objective, as delineated in the Evaluation Design. After the program was finally approved, the coordinator in cooperation with project staff developed a student questionnaire consisting of twelve items that explored attitudes toward school, self, tutors, reading and mathematics. See Appendix for a copy of the instrument. Because of the lag in approval time and because of the time required for questionnaire production, it was not possible to administer the device as a pretest until February, 1975. With appropriate change in wording, the same questionnaire was given in June, 1975 as a posttest. The responses on both tests were tabulated by school, item number and subject area. From the data, totals, means and mean differences were calculated for each school and for the population as a whole. An item analysis was made in order to facilitate describing gains qualitatively and in narrative form.

With a view to assessing the extent and quality of program implementation, as described in the proposal and as recommended by the previous evaluator, the project was closely monitored through site visits made at the opening and at the close

of the project year. Over the course of these visits, master teachers, educational assistants and tutors were observed and interviewed in some depth. School administrators were consulted both in person and by telephone. Moreover, contact with the project coordinator was maintained at all times to secure data on all aspects of program functioning.

Chapter III: FINDINGS

Evaluation Objective 6.1. Essentially, the evaluation objective of Homework Helpers was to determine whether, as a result of participation in this component, enrolled pupils will demonstrate an improvement in attitudes toward self and school as measured by a questionnaire developed by program personnel.

Table 1 constitutes a summary of the item analysis of the questionnaire administered to all the children in the program. The results indicate that, compared with their attitudes at the start of the program, the youngsters demonstrated considerable improvement in attitude toward self and school by the end of the project year. This finding is underscored by the fact that, on the pretest, a total of 919 responses (357+562) showed negative attitudes toward self and school; this was reduced to 37 (19+18) in the posttest. Concurrently, positive attitudes increased from 1098 (436+662) on the pretest to 2232 (853+1379) on the posttest.

Analysis of individual test items also showed significant positive results. Most noteworthy perhaps were the large gains that occurred in liking the tutor (174), enjoying going to the Homework Helper Program (151), feeling the tutor liked the pupil (145), feeling the teacher liked the pupil (134), liking to go to school (112), and enjoying reading (107). Concurrently, large

declines were recorded in negative attitudes about all of the items on the test.

Table 2 is an analysis of the total and mean scores on the questionnaire for each of the nine schools in the program and for the group as a whole. It shows clearly that not only did the entire group improve considerably in attitude toward self and school but that every school in the program did so as well.

TABLE 1: Item Analysis of the Results of the Questionnaire, with total responses for each item.

ITEMS	TEST	Never 1	Seldom 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5	DIFF*
1. I like going to school.	Pre	29	36	69	48	74	112
	Post	4	3	42	69	110	
2. I feel I do good work in school.	Pre	18	54	127	34	25	100
	Post	3	1	50	79	93	
3. I feel smart in school.	Pre	40	58	101	28	24	69
	Post	1	1	59	79	88	
4. I feel my teacher likes me.	Pre	32	26	84	41	70	134
	Post	2	1	29	65	127	
5. I enjoy going to the Homework Helper Program.	Pre	21	32	63	43	100	151
	Post	1	1	17	58	146	
6. I like my tutor.	Pre	18	17	70	38	112	174
	Post	2	1	15	54	155	
7. I feel my tutor likes me	Pre	25	24	82	45	78	145
	Post	2	1	31	66	128	
8. I feel I can do my own work in reading.	Pre	33	69	91	30	32	82
	Post	0	2	37	85	99	
9. I feel I can do my own work in mathematics.	Pre	39	63	93	33	27	79
	Post	0	2	48	68	113	
10. I feel I can do my homework well.	Pre	29	73	97	27	30	73
	Post	0	0	52	79	96	
11. I enjoy reading.	Pre	30	53	79	34	56	107
	Post	0	0	35	78	112	
12. I enjoy doing mathematic	Pre	43	55	88	35	34	87
	Post	4	5	28	73	112	
TOTALS	Pre	357	562	1044	436	662	1313
	Post	19	18	443	853	1379	

* DIFF = Posttest Responses (4 + 5) - Pretest Responses (1 + 2)

TABLE 2: Results of the Questionnaire for each School

SCHOOL NUMBER AND NAME	TEST	Pupil Number	Total Score	Mean	Mean Diff.
1. Fort Greene	Pre	29	1219	42.03	11.5
	Post	28	1499	53.53	
2. St. Brigid	Pre	31	1156	37.29	12.71
	Post	13	650	50.0	
3. Our Lady of Sorrows	Pre	26	991	38.11	13.13
	Post	25	1281	51.24	
4. Sacred Heart	Pre	30	1270	42.33	10.93
	Post	34	1811	53.26	
5. Our Lady of Peace	Pre	23	784	34.08	16.13
	Post	23	1155	50.21	
6. Yeshiva Karlin Stolin	Pre	31	1182	38.12	8.36
	Post	29	1348	46.48	
7. Bnos Jacob	Pre	24	1122	46.75	9.02
	Post	18	1004	55.77	
8. Bobover	Pre	38	1041	27.39	26.11
	Post	40	2140	53.50	
9.Beth Jacob	Pre	23	914	39.73	6.82
	Post	18	838	46.55	
TOTALS	Pre	259	9667	37.32	14.10
	Post	228	11726	51.42	

Evaluation Objective 6. The major academic achievement effects, as a result of services provided by homework helpers, are accounted for in the two main instructional components of Corrective Reading and Corrective Mathematics.

Some indication of the impact of Homework Helpers on the other two components is afforded by the following letter received by one master teacher from a colleague in in the Title I Corrective Reading Program, dated April 30, 1975.

> Dear Suri,
>
> The work you're doing with the girls is getting results!
>
> If the post-tests mean anything, improvement was shown in those skills that you were working on with individuals. For example, you were working with I,B. on main ideas. She went up 2 years (I mean her grade level went up 2 years) in literal comprehension.
>
> I thought you'd be glad to know.
>
> Yours,
>
> Judy

Findings Concerning Tutors:

Near the termination of the project year, a total of 78 tutors were asked to rate the program in terms of their own attitudes. The purpose was to verify the findings relative to the attitudes expressed on the student questionnaire and to seek information on related matters. The largest number of tutors said they liked the program very much this year (66), a finding which coincided closely with that of their pupils. Similarly, 66 tutors (84%) stated they liked their students and 57(73%) believed that their students liked them. This result compared favorably with the 92% of the youngsters who said they liked their tutors and the 86% who felt their tutors liked them. Of the entire group of tutors, 51 stated that the master teacher and the educational assistant helped them a great deal this year while 47 thought their pupils liked coming to Homework Helpers after school very much. In all, 470 strong positive responses were obtained about the program compared with 16 strongly negative ones.

Furthermore, an effort was made by the evaluator to elicit from the tutors extended answers on other matters related to the program. On the subject of what helped the pupils most, the consensus was that encouragement, attention and praise - positive reinforcement - was most effective. Of rather lesser significance was explaining their work to them and discussing the importance of education. Only two tutors saw fit to mention becoming a friend rather than a tutor to their students. On the matter of constraints, most felt they had no problems; of those who had problems, lack of enough and proper materials was mentioned most frequently. Two others were insufficient time and irresponsible pupil behaviors.

In addition to gaining experience in teaching, a substantial number of tutors felt they grew in understanding of and having patience with children. A smaller number said they got a feeling of satisfaction in helping the youngsters. Finally and unfortunately, no new ideas for improving the Homework Helpers Program emerged from the tutors.

Findings During Site Visits:

Eight of the nine building principals were interviewed at the close of the project year. The consensus was that they were quite pleased with the program this year, that the children were generally working diligently on visits to the centers, that the youngsters seemed to be progressing well in their studies and that they have a more positive attitude to school. When pressed for details of their perception of the project, most said that it supplements and reinforces the regular day school program and that its emphasis is on helping the children with their homework. Some were aware that its major thrust was to supplement the Title I program and it had no direct relationship to classroom homework. Two were concerned about pupil attendance at the centers and one had reservations about the program coordinator in terms of lateness of supplies and failure to make a sufficient number of visits.

Observed by the evaluator at each center were small clusters consisting of one tutor with from one-to-three pupils seated at a table or desk, usually in a large room such as a lunchroom. For the most part, master teachers or educational assistants circulated to offer suggestions or check on progress. Available to tutors were pupil folders with intercomponent recommendations in

which they wrote comments, some of which were just begun or were seriously out-of-date. The instructional materials varied from many to few; from appropriate to inappropriate. By and large, tutors seemed to be occupied with textbooks, helping the children with their homework. Seldom, if ever, did tutors appear to be aware of or working with diagnosed pupil weaknesses in reading and mathematics or engaged in treating such weaknesses specifically. In at least one school, attendance was observed to be far below enrollment.

Moreover, in terms of implementation of the program as it appears in the proposal, the operation was somewhat deficient. There was little articulation with the Title I instructional components as regards workshops, nor was a diagnostic-prescriptive approach readily apparent. In addition, classroom teachers did not meet with tutors at all, much less at frequent intervals as stated in the proposal. There is no evidence that tutors kept pupil work folders which were inspected weekly, which contained suggestions for planning and which featured an ongoing evaluation of the pupil's progress. At the termination of the program, no center had ten tutors; indeed, one had as few as six.

On the other hand, the previous evaluator had made a large number of suggestions most of which had been carried out: 1) master teachers were making a determined effort to schedule an equal amount of help in reading and mathematics for those children in need of both; 2) by the end of this project year more materials had arrived at all centers, although they were still far from suf-

ficient, appropriate or stimulating; 3) basic supplies were available at all centers; 4) required attendance of at least four hours per week was implemented; 5) all centers started daily immediately after school; 6) tutors were paid promptly; 7) records of attendance were maintained on a daily basis by educational assistants and records of daily work was kept by tutors; 8) either the master teacher or the educational assistant worked in or was connected with the site school during the day; 9) almost all tutors had previous experience working with children; 10) letters were prepared and distributed in order to communicate with parents; 11) master teachers were rated by tutors and others; 12) the program was expanded to include nine schools; and 13) an effort was made to publicize the program.

Findings During Conferences:

Following the observations, conferences were held with all master teachers in the field, usually attended by the educational assistants. Based on a prepared form, responses were sought regarding their opinions, problems and suggestions.

Asked to rate various aspects of the program on a scale from 1(lowest) to 5 (highest), the master teachers gave the highest score to the educational assistants (mean = 4.88); second was the time allotted to pupils for instruction. Lowest rating was accorded the tutor training program with a mean score of 3.83. Intermediate ratings were attained by the tutors themselves, who scored 4.05 on the average, and instructional materials which achieved a mean score of 4.25.

Viewing the Homework Helper Program in its entirety, the master teachers gave it a mean score of 4.33, one-third the way between good and very good. Advanced as reasons for the rating was the positive feedback from parents and classroom teachers as well as the fact that they had observed much pupil progress for themselves.

Problems and Suggestions:

By far the most pressing problem expressed by the master teachers was the inadequacy of the instructional materials and the time it took them to arrive. As a group, they suggested that the program be funded early so as to allow sufficient time to confer, plan, select pupils, train tutors, obtain materials and initiate the program quickly. They favored a uniform set of records, simplified paperwork and having the coordinator more directly involved with the program at the centers. Among the interesting ideas that emerged were using older tutors (one middle-aged woman was doing extremely well), having written guidelines prepared by the coordinator, employing separate sound-proofed rooms for tutoring and raising the image of the program by permitting better students to enter up to a limit of 25% of the total.

In all fairness, it must be noted that many of the problems could have been avoided if the program had been funded earlier in the school year.

Chapter IV: SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

By all accounts, the Homework Helpers Program has achieved its major objective of improving the attitude of participants toward school and self. Additionally, it has been of some assistance to the Corrective Reading and Mathematics components in attaining their objectives. All who were consulted - administrators, master teachers, educational assistants, tutors and pupils alike - were positively disposed toward the program. Based on these findings, it may be said that the project should be recycled.

Nevertheless, certain flaws do exist in its implementation: a) because of late funding and resultant staffing problems, several centers were remiss in executing it precisely as it appears in the proposal; b) building administrators and others gave the distinct impression that the thrust of the program was merely to help youngsters do their homework, rather than viewing it as supportive of Corrective Reading and Mathematics; c) tutors have demonstrated an urgent need to be trained in using a diagnostic, varied and stimulating approach to teaching their charges; d) overall supervision requires strengthening to improve attendance, articulate with other components and maintain records and e) materials were so inadequate or inappropriate that they were infrequently utilized. Accordingly, if the program is to be renewed, it is recommended that:

1. It be funded as early as possible in order to prevent the problems that arose during the current school year. Early funding should provide the time to secure adequate and appropriate materials, recruit competent staff, facilitate full implementation of the proposal, obtain diagnostic information through articulation with other components and involve parents more directly in the program.

2. Before commencement of the program in the fall, schedule an orientation period of several days to take place at central office and at the sites, consisting of conferences and workshops. Among the possible purposes could be to review the proposal for full implementation, plan prescriptions for treatment of pupil deficits, set up a uniform system of records, train tutors and exchange ideas, methods and products.

3. Change the perceived image of the project by altering its name and by publicizing its true goals. Some titles for consideration are After-School Club, Afternoon Helpers, Tutorial Centers and the like. Each master teacher should be charged with the prime responsibility for informing principals and others of program objectives and activities. Related publicity should stress the positive aspects and unique benefits of the program.

4. To improve overall supervision, one or more of the following should prove helpful: a) reduce the number of centers to six or seven to permit more frequent visitation and service; b) employ a part-time trainer to assist at centers as required; c) plan frequent and regular visits to sites to monitor progress and to help with problems; d) write written reports following all visits and follow up on recommendations; e) inspect all pupil, tutor and center records during each visit and f) provide for intervisitation to well-functioning centers as needed.

5. With the aid of master teachers, consider developing a handbook or set of guidelines for proper operation of a center. A document of this sort could be extremely helpful to new staff and others in need of guidance.

Function # 09-59633
Homework Helpers

Measures of growth other than Standardized Tests

30D. This question is designed to describe the attainment of approved objectives not normally associated with measurement by norm referenced standardized achievement tests. Such objectives usually deal with behavior that is indirectly observed, especially in the affective domain. For example, a reduction in truancy, a positive change in attitude toward learning, a reduction in disruptive behavior, an improved attitude toward self (as indicated by repeated interviews), etc., are frequently held to be prerequisite to the shift toward increased academic achievement by disadvantaged learners. Where your approved measurement devices do not lend themselves to reporting on tables 30A, B or C, use any combination of items and report on separate pages. Attach additional pages if necessary.

Component Code	Activity Code	Objective Code	
6 0 8 2 4	7 2 2	8 1 1	52

Brief Description The twelve-item questionnaire was designed by staff to determine degree of improvement in attitude toward school and self. It was administered at the nine centers to students who were asked to rate each item by checking the proper column. The scale was tallied by master teachers who returned it to the coordinator.

Number of cases observed: 228 Number of cases in treatment: 228

Pretreatment index of behavior (Specify scale used): The scale ranged from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always) for each item. Expected Pretreatment index was mainly at the 1 - 2 level of behavior; at the Posttreatment, the index was expected to rise to the 4 - 5 level on the average.

Criterion of success: Improvement from Pretest to Posttest, as described in the Evaluation Design.

Was objective fully met? Yes [x] No [ ] If yes, by what criteria do you know? The mean scores for all individual items and for the test as a whole shifted to the upper end of the scale.

Comments:

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
Post-Test

Student's Initials_____Age_____Sex_____

School_____Grade_____Date_____

Student is being tutored in reading_____mathematics_____

Boys and Girls,

This questionnaire will help your tutors to determine whether or not they have helped you in the Homework Helper Program. Please answer every question as well as you can.

PLACE A CHECK IN THE COLUMN WHICH YOU THINK ANSWERS THE QUESTION BEST.

SINCE I HAVE BEEN ATTENDING THE HOMEWORK HELPER PROGRAM:	Never 1	Seldom 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
1. I like going to school.					
2. I feel I do good work in school.					
3. I feel smart in school.					
4. I feel my teacher likes me.					
5. I enjoy going to the Homework Helper Program.					
6. I like my tutor.					
7. I feel my tutor likes me.					
8. I feel I can do my own work in reading.					
9. I feel I can do my own work in mathematics.					
10. I feel I can do my homework well.					
11. I enjoy reading.					
12. I enjoy doing mathematics.					